



## TRAINING MARINE FAMILIES FOR SEPARATION



In a recent article in the *Orange County Register*, Marine spouse Jenny Sokol shares what she has learned over the past 17 years being married to a Marine and experiencing his deployments. "These days, saying goodbye is not nearly as tough as it used to be," Sokol said. "The Marine Corps now trains families in advance of separation." [Marine Corps Family Team Building](#) holds workshops like "Safe at Home" and "Effects of Combat Operational Stress on Marines & Families." The [Military Family Life Consultants](#) (MFLCs) and counselors help military families learn how to thrive -not just survive- during lengthy separations. Each deploying unit is also assigned a [Family Readiness Officer](#) dedicated to empowering families. These programs not only ensure that spouses do not feel abandoned; they ultimately aid in

the retention of Marines.

**[Read More of Jenny Sokol's article >>](#)**

**[Also Read: Family Readiness Program supports deployed Marines and families >>](#)**

**[Watch video on how support for children facing challenges can make them stronger >>](#)**

## 'HEROES AND HEALTHY FAMILIES'

The Heroes and Healthy Families Program equips Marines with resources to effectively address growing concerns at the unit level, such as combat stress, hooked on adrenaline, domestic violence, substance abuse, suicide and maintaining healthy relationships. On Feb. 8, nearly 900 Marines with Marine Forces Reserve came together to discuss and learn about the program. Leading the discussion on these uneasy subjects was a host of speakers who contributed with words of wisdom. Heroes and Healthy Families has offered several conferences at Marine Corps Bases Camp Pendleton, Calif., and Camp Lejeune, N.C., over the past five years, but this was the first time the program was presented specifically to Reserve Marines. "We don't leave Marines, or the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen we serve with, behind," said Lt. Gen. John K. Kelly, commander, Marine Forces Reserve. "If we don't look out for their well-being after deployment, it's the same as leaving them on the battlefield."

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[Also read: Officials recommend updating online family data >>](#)

## NEWS

### Q & A WITH NAVY SECRETARY



The Secretary of the Navy, Ray Mabus, recently sat down with The *San Diego Union-Tribune* to discuss issues confronting the Navy and the Marine Corps.

Q: You say Marines will be smaller but more capable in the future. How can the Corps do that as it loses people and vehicles?

A: It is critical not to confuse the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle and combat assault capability. We absolutely have to have an amphibious force in readiness, and that absolutely has to be the

Marine Corps. The Navy and the Marine Corps have war-gamed this. The Navy can come in much closer with the defensive systems we've got now, somewhere between 12 and 16 miles offshore. Once you're in that close, you don't have to have this brick do 25 knots.

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## CORPS SEEKS IDEAS FOR NEW AMPHIB VEHICLES



The United States Marine Corps is seeking industry proposals to replace the canceled Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV), a complex, high-speed amphibious vehicle. The Marines are seeking to upgrade the service's existing AAV7A1 amphibious assault vehicles, and they want to create an amphibious combat vehicle able to perform across a full range of military operations. The vehicle is expected to be configured in several variants, including a squad maneuver/fighting vehicle, a

command-and-control vehicle, and a vehicle for recovery and maintenance. In addition, an RFI for a new Marine personnel carrier (MPC) was published Feb. 18 on the Federal Business Opportunities website at [www.fbo.gov](http://www.fbo.gov).

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## NEW TRAINING REQUIREMENTS



On Feb. 11, Marines with 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, received training on the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected All Terrain Vehicle at the III MEF Motor Transportation Training and Simulation Center in preparation for an upcoming deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The safety features of the vehicle provide optimal survivability and mobility in a variety of combat operations that help Marines stay in

the fight and come home safe. "This truck is by far my favorite of the tactical vehicles I've driven. It has a lot of great safety features and its speed gives it the upper hand," said Lance

Cpl. Christian Greenough, motor transportation mechanic with 3rd Recon. Bn.

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[Also Read: Maritime Contingency Force Remains Ready >>](#)

## 'THERE ARE NO FORMER MARINES'



Bill Pederson decided to knock at a stranger's door when he noticed a U.S. Marine Corps flag flying in the front yard. It was Nov. 4, 2010, six days before the Marines' 235th birthday. Pederson said he stopped because he "wanted to greet the Marine and wish him a 'happy birthday.'" Adrienne Johnson opened the door and explained that the Marine Pederson wished to greet was her 19-year-old son, who had died in a motorcycle accident. Pederson remembers standing there in shock wondering what to say next. "I told her how

bad I felt and that I was sorry for her loss. I told her, 'Semper Fi.' "For Adrienne, who had visited her son's grave that morning, it was a sign from God. Pederson made another visit to Johnson this month, wearing his Marine Corps baseball cap, t-shirt and sweatshirt. "I am a Marine there are no former Marines," Pederson said. "Marines, they hang together." "There are only two people who understand Marines and that's Marines and the enemy. It's hard to explain, unless you've been there. I think a mother, especially a mother who has lost a son, could understand. This kid was gung-ho. It's just a shame," Pederson said.

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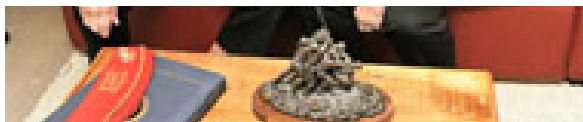
[Read Bill Pederson's Letter of the Month in Leatherneck >>](#)

## VETERAN AND WIFE RECOGNIZE SERVICE MEMBERS



Chuck and Lynn LaBerge, leaders of the Capital Marine Detachment of the Marine Corps League, spend seven months every year organizing the Enlisted Awards Program for the yearly Modern Day Marine Military Exposition in Quantico, Va. The awards ceremony, which takes place Sept. 28-30 this year, recognizes 12 service members of the Marine Corps and Navy for their outstanding achievements during their





service. The ceremony is part of a larger exposition, in which companies exhibit equipment of interest to the Marine Corps. "I'd say that the Marine Corps, without a doubt, is the finest fraternal organization in the world," Chuck LaBerge said. "No one is any more faithful to a Marine than another Marine. We are a brotherhood that is unbelievably solid."

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## HEROES OF THE WEEK

### MEMORIES OF A FALLEN BROTHER REMEMBERED

"Pyeatt was cool; he was a good guy," uttered Lance Cpl. Michael Guzinsky, an intelligence operator with 2nd Radio Battalion and close friend to Cpl. Lucas Pyeatt, who was killed in action, Feb. 5, by an improvised explosive device in the town of Kajaki, Afghanistan. "He was one of my best friends." Pyeatt, who hailed from West Chester, Ohio, was a team leader with 2nd Radio Battalion and was attached to Battery B, 1st Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 8, in support of the ongoing fight against the Taliban in and around Kajaki. Guzinsky credits Pyeatt's lead-from-the-front mentality to his time as an infantryman.

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### BRONZE STAR FOR AFGHANISTAN HEROISM

In January, Sgt. John Spring, Jr., of Windham, Maine, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for heroism during a 2009 operation in Afghanistan. Spring led his men through a daylong firefight, drawing enemy fire and carrying a fallen comrade over his shoulder and then returning to man a vacant machine gun. According to the *Portland Press Herald*, Spring served two tours in Iraq before his unit was part of the July 2009 U.S. offensive into the Taliban strongholds in southern Afghanistan.

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# EVENTS

## CMC TO PUBLISH FORCE STRUCTURE REVIEW

The Commandant of the Marine Corps plans to release the Preliminary Report of the Marine Corps' Force Structure Review on March 1. It will be published on the homepage of [www.marines.mil](http://www.marines.mil).

## MARINE CORPS MARATHON SOLD OUT



The Marine Corps Marathon (MCM) sold out all available online entries in just 28 hours and four minutes, marking the fastest sell-out in the history of "The People's Marathon." The 2011 MCM will welcome 30,000 registered participants. The MCM will start in Arlington, Va., wind through the nation's capital and cross the scenic Potomac River before heading back into Northern Virginia for the iconic finish at the Marine Corps War Memorial in Rosslyn.

[Visit Marine Corps Marathon website >>](#)